2: Courlander B-S (1937-1960) 1960 BV3 HaBi BV3

of "Merci Papa Vincent" sprang up in the side streets of Port-au-Prince. One rendition (as translated) went:

We know the man who loves the people,
He is Sténio Vincent!
Who made my wife leave me to go to her family?
He is Président Vincent!
Who made my skin show through my worn out pants?
He is Président Vincent!
Who is the man who made my house fall down?
He is Président Vincent!
Oh, we call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

So widespread did the burlesques on the original become that the tune itself became suspect. One never knew which versions were running through the minds of the listeners.

In 1950, during the administration of President Estimé, there was a new public works program which provided employment for a good many needy people in the Port-au-Prince area, and a coumbite song of the period went:

Président Estimé veille, oh!
Quembé pays yà pas laguié oh!
C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin président!
C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin président cila!
Quembé pays yà pas laguié oh!
Port-au-Prince oh tourné Havane oh! [Ex. 117]

President Estimé *veille*, oh!
Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
Port-au-Prince, oh, is turning into a Havana, oh!

When Estimé was overthrown by a military coup, the melody lingered on, but the name of the protagonist was changed.

No president of Haiti has served his term of office, either for good or bad, without providing the raw materials for a folk song. His heroic deeds, his failures, and his foibles are as likely as not to be perpetuated in the music of the people.

As for the presidency itself, it is held in the highest esteem. A rousing salute song, reminiscent of the Marseillaise, sends every new president-elect on the way to the palace:

Président passé là,
L'ap monté au gouvernement!

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

reported in Haiti that although they joined patriotically in the cheering when the Marines embarked in 1934, many of them shed tears to see the departure of 2,000 monthly salaries, most of which had been enriching the local tills. Indeed, the country came much closer to establishing a mercantile middle class during the Occupation than ever before. The only real control left behind by the Americans was an overseer of the national budget, destined to leave as soon as Haiti's external debt was finally paid off. To that end the government saved rather than spent, so that businessmen found no comfort in the state of economic affairs, particularly during a decade of world depression and European disturbance. Nationalist economic theories in Europe have upset Haitian markets, so that the élite thriftily save their pennies against hard times instead of spending them freely on present luxuries. The American overseer of the budget withdrew in 1941.

At many points the forces of the Occupation touched unwittingly upon deep-rooted prejudices of the Haitian people. In order to secure laborers for road construction the Marines revived an old corvée law of Christophe's time, requiring forced labor on public works at the need of the government. Many of the ill-nourished peasants were taxed beyond their physical powers by work on the roads, so that an armed revolt by caco guerrillas broke out. Its suppression required months of time and cost many lives, leaving in its train a great deal of ill will.

The efficient Americans also came to grief when they attempted to make Haitians orderly in the American way. Land titles were in chaos, as we have noted. American experts wished to find a basis for internal taxation, so that economic reform might be effective and permanent. The effort to have people declare their claims so that these might be properly registered had to be given up after a few weeks, for the peasant owners knew without written deeds their local boundaries, and among the squatters those who realized their title might not stand under strict investigation were understandably averse to having questions of property tenure raised by the authorities of an alien and interfering government.

Wherever Marine barracks were located, there were centres of a cultural dissemination which was bound in the long run to affect Haitian ideas and practices. Automobiles, radios, amusements, even the daily conversation of the Marines, all left their mark upon a people who had been effectively isolated from the world for more than a century.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

two rooms to house the whole family. "In these huts, filth and every species of uncleanliness prevail, for the people give themselves up to their indolent and lazy habits. It is common to see the pigs and poultry herding with the family."[19]

The furnishings in the huts were as simple as the construction. Rarely was there more than one bed, if that; the children of the family used mats for sleeping. A table, a stool, a couple of patched chairs, calabash bowls, an iron pot or two (and in later days, discarded gasoline tins), comprise the household equipment.

The fine roads of the French régime became rutted and washed, were overgrown with weeds, and soon reverted to wasteland or became nothing more than paths. Carriages ceased to be of any use, and there were few wagons; donkeys and horses became the regular means of transportation, and this was true until the Americans began to build roads again in 1916. The colonial régime had left a legacy of bridges, public buildings, parks, irrigation ditches; practically every improvement of this nature crumbled in slow decay and was not replaced. The temperate Dr. Brown closed his account of the Haiti of 1836 with the following paragraph:

> To sum up all that might be said upon the actual condition of Hayti, poverty and degradation stare one in the face wherever he goes—and the state of the whole island will be fully understood in the United States when it is bluntly asserted, that the country is one continuous negro village, built of mud cabins, and unfurnished with the usual comforts of life. The population is, with small exceptions, an indolent, naked multitude, without sustenance or a disposition to make exertions to obtain it; without enormous vices, but petty and insignificant in every thing relating to human character, and not many removes from the tribes upon the Niger in point of civilization. The fact is indisputable, that as a nation the blacks of Saint Domingo are in a retrograde movement as regards intellectual improvement, and no obstacle seems to exist to prevent this descent to barbarism. The government and institutions of the country must for the present remain unstable, and it is difficult to pronounce what the changes involved in the future will produce.[20]

Progress, as Westerners understand it, comes through contacts and competition, both of which were lacking to Haiti in large measure throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. While externally

19. Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 356.
20. *Op. cit.*, II, 288–289.